

Chong names new team in Sabah cabinet

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The bottom line is performance and work, says chief minister

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KOTA KINABALU Tues
Three new cabinet members were sworn in along with new Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Chong Kah Kiat here today

Former chief minister Datuk Seri Panglima Salleh Tun Said and former deputy chief ministers Datuk Ghapur Salleh and Tan Sri Joseph Kurup took on new postings under Chong's team for the next two years

Salleh is now the local government and housing minister Ghapur is the minister in the Chief Minister's Department and Kurup is the resource development minister

Earlier in the morning Chong was sworn in by head of state Tun Sakaran Dandai at the istana. The other ministers including three deputy chief ministers took their oath in the afternoon.

The deputy chief ministers are Datuk Lajim Ukin, Datuk Tham Nyip Shen and Datuk Wences Angang.

The other cabinet ministers are Datuk Raymond Tan Shu Kiah, Datuk Yahya Husin replacing Datuk Rubin Balang at the youth, culture and sports development ministry and Datuk Musa Aman taking over the finance ministry previously held by Datuk Seri Panglima Osu Sukam.

Chong is also keeping his portfolio as the tourism development, environment, sci-

ence and technology minister.

The new line up which excludes Osu also sees eight assistant ministers being shifted to different portfolios.

The agricultural and food industry ministry and the rural development and entre-

preneur ministry will now have two assistant ministers.

Chong said the rationale to add assistant ministers to the two ministries was to give extra attention to the respective sectors with focus on the northern region of Sabah

which he described as being among the most depressed zones in the country.

On bringing in three former senior cabinet members into his line up, Chong said their experience in the administration of the state can help him discharge his duties.

The bottom line is performance and work. I intend to ensure my team will work very hard so as not to disappoint the people of Sabah, he said.

Asked about plans to avoid becoming a lame duck leader as purported by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on previous chief ministers, he said:

Time will tell whether I have succeeded or not.

Chong said two cabinet ministers dropped from the line up, Rubin and Bumburing, will be given roles in the government.

I have spoken to them and I will make sure that they are actively involved in the development of the state, he said.

He also played down claims that there was a desperate attempt to stop him from being sworn in today.

However, Chong admitted that he received a list of signatures from state assemblymen last night who support him as chief minister and abide and respect the decision made by the prime minister.

This shows the kind of unity we have in the BN. I have a job to do and I am very comfortable. I know for a fact I will get full support from all the component parties, he said.